

**Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics****Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-002 Dolores River Canyon WSA Adjacent**Acreage:** 32,650

(1) Is the area of sufficient size? (If the area meets one of the exceptions to the size criterion, check "Yes" and describe the exception in the space provided below),

Yes ☒ No ☐

Description (describe the boundaries of the area--wilderness inventory roads, property lines, etc.):

Unit is adjacent to the Dolores River Canyon WSA. It includes Nyswonger Mesa, Wray Mesa and Davis Mesa.

(2) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Description (include land ownership, location, topography, vegetation, and summary of major human uses/activities):

Some lands within the unit on Davis Mesa between the WSA boundary on the northeast side of Wild Steer Canyon and Montrose County Road DD16 are natural in appearance with few signs of human-caused alterations to the natural landscape.

Wray Mesa, Nyswonger Mesa and the remainder of Davis Mesa lack naturalness, due to human modifications including county roads, power transmission lines and other linear ground disturbances (mineral exploration routes, vehicle routes, and an airstrip).

31,790 acres were found to lack naturalness, leaving 860 acres that appear to be natural.

(3) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐

Description:

Of the remaining area of the unit that possesses naturalness, much is located between road DD16 and the rim above the road on its southwest side. This area is a narrow strip of land and close to the county road. This strip varies from 0.10 to 0.25 miles in width, with the bulk of the unit overlooking the county road. Opportunities for solitude are poor in most of this area.

A 550-acre bench (shown on the attached map inside the blue outline) has opportunities for solitude because most of that area is below and out of direct line of sight of vehicle routes. However since most of the area is within 0.5 miles of the vehicle routes, the opportunities are not outstanding.

(4) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes   X   No            N/A           

Description (describe the area's outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation):

A 550-acre bench (shown on the attached map inside the blue outline) has opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation because most of that area is below and out of direct line of sight of vehicle routes. The opportunities would be outstanding in connection with the existing WSA.

All travel in this area is by non-motorized/non-mechanized means.

The area has no developed recreation facilities.

Since it is adjacent to the Dolores River Canyon WSA a dominant impression of an observer is that it is part of a great expanse of wild country. In particular, the view from the edge of this area overlooking Wild Steer Canyon is wild and dramatic. A person with proper gear and primitive outdoor travel skills would feel compelled to explore this area and continue into the WSA.

(5) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value)?

Yes            No   X   N/A           

Description:

## Summary of Analysis\*

**Area Unique Identifier:** CO-S05000-002 Dolores River Canyon WSA Adjacent

### Summary

Results of analysis:

Much of the originally proposed unit lacks naturalness, and/or outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, or possesses a combination of deficiencies.

Nyswonger Mesa and Wray Mesa have high densities of old vehicle routes and linear surface disturbances. Few of the routes have been maintained for many years and have fallen into disuse. They are not "roads" as defined in this wilderness characteristics inventory process. They are however wide-spread and substantially noticeable human-made (unnatural) modifications to the land. Nyswonger Mesa and Wray Mesa do not possess naturalness, and therefore do not possess wilderness characteristics.

Much of Davis Mesa, northwest of Wild Steer Canyon, has similar deficiencies preventing it from possessing wilderness characteristics. The north end of Davis Mesa (outside the WSA) has a two vehicle routes in a fairly constrained area, and therefore does not possess naturalness. The southeast end of the proposed unit on Davis Mesa also has a density of vehicle routes that precludes naturalness.

Also on Davis Mesa there are long narrow strips of land in the Colorado Wilderness Network proposal between Montrose County Road DD16 and the WSA boundary. Because these lands are topographically isolated between the cliff line of the WSA and the county road, they do not possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

One 550-acre unit was found that is adjacent to the WSA that possesses wilderness characteristics. The unit is bounded as follows:

- By unnamed BLM roads on the northeast and southeast; and
- By the WSA on the northwest and southwest.
- It is found in parts of the sections listed in the following townships;
  - 46N 18W, Sec 2, 3, and 4
  - 47N 18W, Sec 33 and 34

There is just over a half mile of road that extends in a forked prong into the unit. It has been cherry-stemmed out of the unit. See attached map.

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No

2. Does the area appear to be natural?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

☒ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ N/A

4. Does the area have supplemental values?    ☐ Yes    ☒ No    ☐ N/A  
Check one:

☒ The area, or a portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

☐ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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4-3-15  
(Date)

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(Name and Title)

\* This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.